

# The Times Leader

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## Monroe extension office prepping for 2020



T-L Photo/ROBERT A. DEFRANK Ken Stewart, program assistant at Monroe County's Ohio State University Extension Office, and other staff thank voters for approving a renewal levy and prepare for 2020 projects.

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WOODSFIELD — Monroe County’s extension office has had a busy 2019, with plans in the works for 2020.

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Extension Office Associate Mary Jo Westfall is anticipating Community Development Block Grant funding next year.

*“I’ll be working with commissioners to apply for some more CDBG funds,” she said. “Probably March we’ll have our first public hearing.”*

She said \$150,000 is available through CDBG’s allocation program.

*“That’s the money the commissioners get every year,” she said. “The commissioners can choose up to four projects to do, and they’ll make that selection the spring next year.”*

Westfall said the county would also be eligible for \$750,000 in Neighborhood Revitalization Grant funds.

“However that’s competitive, so we’ll have to score well to get that money.

*“That will also be going on in the spring,” she said.*

*“The fire departments always have a need. The e-squads always have a need. The community centers, they always need improvements to their buildings. Roads, bridges, culverts, that’s typical of what we apply for with the grant programs.”*

Ken Stewart, program assistant, also thanked the electorate for passing a five year 0.7-mill renewal levy. The levy passed by about 74 percent, with

2,423 voters in favor to 833 opposed.

*“We can thank the voters for that,” he said. “We’ll continue programs such as 4-H.”*

Stewart said the office’s work includes reaching out to the elementary schools with the Botvin Life Skills, named after Gilbert Botvin, Ph.d.

*“Basically it’s to teach seventh graders,” he said, adding the office was working with Woodsfield Elementary and Skyview Elementary. Among the chief objectives is to help discourage drug use.*

*“It involves 72 students and it helps them make better decisions and informed choices, and give them true statistics about smoking and alcohol and drug use, because a lot of times peer pressure is ‘everybody’s doing it,’ when you find out that it’s seven percent of the people your age are doing it, that doesn’t sound like everybody.”*

He also said a co-parenting class is provided by the office to benefit children during a divorce process.

*“We offer this program to the parents,” he said. “Positive co-parenting.”*

The focus is on children younger than 18 and the class helps parents understand the child’s perspective and needs during a divorce. About 25 parents attended the class in 2019.

Stewart said another upcoming event is a Quality Beef Assurance class Thursday at 16714 Wolf Run Road, Caldwell, at no cost. Registration is open.

*“It’s training for people that are selling cattle,” he said. “Producers for that, and students that are doing 4-H projects, if they’re doing a beef project. ... It’s really good for people that are selling...cattle”*

For more information, call Monroe County’s OSU extension office at 740-472-0810 or the Noble County office at 740-732-5681.

Stewart said they also have high hopes for next year’s Monroe County Fair.

*“We had a really good fair this year,”* he said. He said recent fairs have done well in terms of sales made by children in 4-H. Stewart said this is partly due to the oil and gas interests in the area, which have been buying fair animals. *“They try to participate.”*

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